

NEW RECORDS OF LEPIDOPTERA FROM VICTORIA, WITH NOTES ON SOME RARE SPECIES.

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1. NEW RECORDS OF LEPIDOPTERA

Division RHOPALOCERA

Family SATYRIDAE

Ypthima arctous, Fab.

The normal range of this species was from Illawarra in New South Wales, to Cape York and the islands of Torres Strait, round to north western Australia.

For some years, it had been thought that *Y. arctous* might be present in far eastern Victoria, where several other New South Wales species have been recorded. The author spent a week at Mallacoota during February, 1934, and although a careful survey was made for this species it was not seen.

In January 1935, F. E. Wilson, collecting at Nowa Nowa, was fortunate in capturing specimens of both sexes of this butterfly along the Buchan road, some little distance from Nowa Nowa. The author visited the same locality in January, 1938, and collected further specimens, a little to the south of the township. Again, in early February 1947, in company with F. E. Wilson, more specimens were collected along the Buchan road. No doubt other places will be discovered in far eastern Gippsland where this butterfly will be found.

Now that enough specimens have been obtained for purposes of making accurate comparison with long series of specimens from Sydney, N.S.W., it has been found that there are no points of difference between Victorian specimens and those from other parts of Australia.

The genus *Ypthima* Hubn. contains many species of Indo-Malayan butterflies, all of which are very similar in appearance.

Ypthima arctous Fab. is the only species of the genus that occurs in Australia.

Oreixenica latialis Waterhouse & Lyell.

This species was recorded for the first time in Victoria in February, 1947, when it was taken in mid-February by F. E. Wilson

and the author near Mt. Hotham, along the road towards Cobungra, at an altitude just over 5,000 feet.

This butterfly is very abundant on Mt. Kosciusko during late February and throughout March. Waterhouse states "The butterflies there (at Mt. Kosciusko) are so plentiful that at dusk they may be picked from the bushes with the fingers." In view of this statement, it was reasonable to predict that this butterfly would occur on parts of the Victorian Alps, between 5,000 and 6,000 feet.

A closely allied species, *O. orichora orichora* Meyr. which is very similar, but slightly larger, is very plentiful at places of similar altitude on the Alps, also on Mt. Kosciusko. *O. orichora* is on the wing throughout January, but by the middle of February is nearly over. Its place is then apparently taken by *O. latialis*, as is the case at Mt. Kosciusko.

An interesting description of the life history of this butterfly is given by Waterhouse in *What Butterfly is That?* p. 115.

O. latialis was originally described as a subspecies of *Oreixenica lathoniella lathoniella* West, which has several well defined geographical races in southern Australia and Tasmania. Since then both species have been collected in the same localities at the same time. This was the case in the above instance.

Family LYCAENIDAE

Subfamily Lycaeninae

Candalides cyprotus Olliff.

This butterfly has a fairly wide distribution in Australia, being recorded from Illawarra, N.S.W. to Brisbane, the Blue Mountains, South Australia, and the southern coastal portion of Western Australia.

It was not until November 1945, however, that this species was captured in Victoria, when a few specimens were caught on the Little Desert, a few miles south of Kiata. Examples of both sexes were secured, but were in rather wasted condition, showing that it was a little late for the species. In October 1946, another visit was made to the Little Desert, and more specimens were obtained all in much better condition.

It is surprising that with such a wide range, *C. cyprotus* does not appear to have developed any geographical races. Specimens from Western Australia, South Australia, and Victoria however, are slightly smaller than those from New South Wales and Queensland.

Rarely, the central areas of the wings in the female are blue or bluish purple. In the many specimens examined by the author.

this coloration has been noted only in specimens from Brisbane. The foodplant of *C. cyprotus* in Queensland and parts of New South Wales is a leafless shrub locally known as dogwood, but in Victoria there is most likely some other foodplant. This the author suspects to be the leafless parasitic climber *Cassytha* sp. The reasons for this assumption are that a closely related species *C. hyacinthina hyacinthina* Semper. feeds on this creeper, and where *C. cyprotus* was captured in Victoria this plant was very plentiful, and a careful search for any shrub similar to the dogwood was unsuccessful.

A search was made on *Cassytha* for larvæ and pupæ, but without success. At the time, because the butterflies were on the wing, it is probable that eggs only would have been present.

Neolucia sulpitius sulpitius Miskin.

This species was first recorded from Victoria when it was collected by the author near the mouth of the Wingan Inlet, far eastern Gippsland, in February 1946.

This small butterfly has a very wide range in eastern Australia, being found commonly from Sydney to North Queensland. In the Cairns-Cooktown area the race *N. sulpitius obscura* Whs. & Lyell is taken.

It is essentially a coastal species, being found only on the mud flats or salt pans in the estuaries of rivers or creeks, where the foodplant, *Rhagodia billardieri* grows freely. There are possibly other plants allied to *Rhagodia* on which *N. sulpitius* also feeds.

It is to be expected that this small butterfly will be captured at other places along the Victorian coast, because of the occurrence of its foodplant and the number of suitable localities. Waterhouse suggests the possibility of this butterfly being a form of *Neolucia serpentata* H. Sch. which is a very similar insect, and which feeds on species of *Rhagodia* and *Atriplex*.

The author has collected the latter species at many places from Queensland to Victoria, and although found at places on the coast, it is also very abundant at localities far inland. When the two are collected together this point will be settled.

Family HESPERIDAE

Subfamily Trapezitinae

Anisynta dominula drachmophora Meyr.

This skipper butterfly is very plentiful during January and February on the Dorrigo plateau, and Barrington Tops, N.S.W.;

much rarer during the same months at Mt. Kosciusko, and at lower altitudes in Tasmania during February and March.

On account of this extended range, it was expected that it would be found on some of the higher mountains in Victoria. Therefore in late January and early February, 1946, when F. E. Wilson and the author were collecting on the Victorian Alps in the Mt. Hotham area, it was decided to explore all likely looking spots. This eventually proved successful, and a number of male specimens was captured in a grassy gully along the road towards Cobungra, at an altitude of 5,000 feet. All the specimens were in excellent condition, which showed that it was early for the species.

In 1947, the same locality was visited about the middle of February, and further specimens, including females, were obtained in the originally gully, and at another place a few miles further on, at an elevation of about 4,500 feet.

At the New South Wales localities, this butterfly frequents the grassy plains, where it comes freely to the flowers of a species of *Pimelea*; in Victoria however, this was not the case. Although numerous flowers, including *Pimelea*, were in abundance in open spots, the butterflies kept to the gullies where they rested on grass stems.

In the same areas, another rare skipper butterfly, *Oreisplanus munionga* Oll. was taken. Though abundant at Mt. Kosciusko this species is very scarce in Victoria.

Anisynta dominula dominula Plotz. was originally recorded from Tasmania and was thought to have come from the Launceston district. Most Tasmanian examples have come from Cradle Mountain where the race *pria* Whs. is found: this is much smaller than typical *dominula* or *drachmophora*. Quite recently, the author received specimens of *dominula* from southern Tasmania and near sea level; these are almost as large as *drachmophora*, and the spots on the underside are joined to form a continuous band, which would indicate that they are most probably typical *dominula*.

Examination of the Victorian specimens shows them to be rather variable, especially on the underside of the hindwing. In some specimens the spots are inclined to be silvery as in northern examples, in others creamy yellow and forming a band. Comparison of the latter type with the recently acquired Tasmanian specimens shows little difference. New South Wales specimens are darker and more richly coloured beneath and the spots are more silvery.

2. NOTES ON RARE SPECIES OF LEPIDOPTERA IN VICTORIA.

Division HETEROCERA.

Family SPHINGIDAE

Chromus erotus Cram.

This hawk moth is apparently very rare in Victoria, less than half a dozen specimens having been collected, and many years having elapsed since the last record.

A living specimen was forwarded to this Museum from Everton in the north east of Victoria, in March 1947. *C. erotus* is commoner near Sydney and Newcastle, and it occurs even more freely further north and near Brisbane.

It is the finest of the Hawk Moths to be found in Victoria, the forewings being rich brown in colour, and the hindwings orange. The family Sphingidae is poorly represented in Victoria, three species only being anything like abundant and widely distributed.

Division RHOPALOCERA

Family LYCAENIDAE

Subfamily Lycaeninae

Candalides Xanthospilos Hubn.

The range of this species in Australia is given as from Victoria to southern Queensland, though a few specimens have been taken as far north as Kuranda near Cairns. Its occurrence in Victoria, however, is apparently limited to a few specially favoured spots.

The late J. A. Kershaw collected several specimens of this species near Lake Tyers over 25 years ago, one other was collected at Cann River by J. Clark in 1928, and in February 1947, more specimens were taken by F. E. Wilson and the author near Lake Tyers.

It is a very common butterfly near Sydney, where it breeds on several species of *Pimelea*, chiefly *P. linifolia*. The larvæ feed at night, sheltering during the day amongst dead leaves, etc., near the base of the foodplant. The caterpillars are attended by a species of small black ant. In Victoria the foodplant is not known.

Family HESPERIDAE

Subfamily Trapezitinae

Hesperilla picta Leach.

This is another common Sydney butterfly which has extended its range down the south east coast of New South Wales into far eastern Victoria, though it is local and by no means common in the latter State.

It was found freely by the author near Wingan Inlet and near Lake Tyers during late February, 1946, and again by F. E. Wilson and the author at the last named locality in February 1947. It breeds on the Black Fruit Saw Sedge (*Gahnia melanocarpa*), which is confined to swampy gullies, usually near estuaries.

Many years ago, several specimens of *H. picta* were collected near Lake Tyers by the late J. A. Kershaw, and, as far as the author is aware it had not been taken again until 1946. The range of the species is from far eastern Victoria, along the coast of New South Wales, to south Queensland, where it is, however, rare.